Mercenary Figure's Death Investigated

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MIAMI, Feb. 6 (AP) — A Cuban exile who claimed to be recruiting soldiers to fight in Angola has died of a gunshot wound, police said. In his pocket was a note in which he called himself a failure, police said.

Jose Prat, 38, a Bay of Pigs veteran who last month said he and Pedro Martinez were recruiting soldiers to fight against Soviet-backed troops, died Wednesday in the back seat of a car, police said.

Francisco Denavarra, driver of the car, and another passenger, Jose Garcia, said Prat had shot shimself. Denavarra said Prat was in the back seat with an unlocked briefcase containing a pistol when he heard the shot ring out.

Officers said the shooting was still under investigation, but Martinez said he had no doubt the death was a suicide.

"I'm 100 per cent sure, and I feel sick," he said. "He was frustrated about how the United States treats its friends. He kept talking about the Bay of Pigs. He said Angola would be the same."

There is no evidence that a single American mercenary or Cuban exile soldier has signed up in Miami. However, Martinez said he and Prat had recruited about 365 men to travel to Angola and fight for the National Union for Total Independence (UNITA). But, he said, Prat had been advised by the State Department that they were breaking the neutrality law and feared that he would be denied re-entry to the United States.